

THE REMINISCENCES OF CARL SCHURZ

rible number of parents who had lost sons, of wives who had lost their husbands, and of children who had lost their fathers* And there were many tales told and eagerly discussed that were more apt to stir resentful and vindictive feelings—tales of the sacrifices made and the anxieties and heartaches suffered by those who had remained at home; tales of the predatory rebel invasions from Canada, such as the raid on St. Albans; tales of rebel plots to burn down the cities of New York and Chicago, and to spread the small-pox and other contagious diseases among our people; grim and ghastly tales of the specter-like appearance of the Union soldiers who had survived the horrors of the prison-pen at Andersonville; and, ^m above all, tales of the dastardly assassination by rebel hands of our good, dear President Abraham Lincoln—a crime never to be forgiven.

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln was indeed a national calamity of most sinister effect just at that critical period. Very cool reasoners might have concluded that it would, as it soon actually did, turn out to have been the work of a handful of half-crazed fanatics of the lower order, utterly devoid, not only of moral principles, but also of the slightest glimmer of common sense—for nothing could have been more obvious to any sane mind than that this crime could not possibly be of the least benefit to the Southern people in their

desperate straits, but would only serve to
inflamm^e the feelings
of their victorious adversaries against them. The
well-known
fantastic character of that "handsome young
actor in Amer-
ica," John Wilkes Booth, who was the organizer
and the
leading spirit of the murderous plot, might have
gone far to
convince the public mind that this stupid
atrocit^y committed
under such circumstances must have been the
offspring of dis-
eased brains, and could not possibly have been
designed or